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DOD CITES GROWTH IN SEXUAL ASSAULT REPORTING AND RESPONSE AT
USMA – Feb. 7, 2018

WEST POINT, N.Y. – The Department of Defense Annual Report on Sexual Harassment and Violence at the Military Service Academies released today showed an increase of reports of sexual assault during academic year 2016-17 at the U.S. Military Academy.

DOD’s Annual Report on Sexual Harassment and Violence at the Military Service Academies cited an increase in sexual assault reports at all three of the nation’s service academies, the greatest of which was at West Point, which went from 26 reports in 2015-2016, to 50 this last academic year. Superintendent Lt. Gen. Robert L. Caslen Jr. points to the increase as evidence that steps taken by the academy to encourage reporting are working.

“The modifications that have been made are impactful and the numbers show it,” Caslen said. “We are absolutely committed to eliminating sexual harassment and sexual assault throughout our ranks. Therefore, I am encouraged by the increase in reporting as we believe it to be a true indicator in the trust and confidence our Corps of Cadets has in the system and the process overall.”

Among the changes effected since the last DOD report were a policy revision to allow third-party disclosures, location of a private, easily accessible and centrally-located Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention resource center within the cadet area, and relocating USMA’s Sexual Assault Response Coordinator and Victim Advocate into the new SHARP resource center. All three changes were widely publicized.

Additionally, West Point hired an outside consultant to provide a holistic review of USMA’s SHARP prevention program that in-turn reinvigorated our prevention program by providing real-time data on attitudes and beliefs of the Corps of Cadets.

“Even though a single sexual assault is one too many,” added Caslen, “the academy has made tremendous strides in encouraging reporting, and the latest DOD report is evidence victims have greater confidence that their claims will be investigated and acted upon.”

“While our commitment to building a healthy command climate where every member is treated with dignity and respect is unchanged, know we have more work to do to develop meaningful, relevant and timely educational experiences for our cadets,” Caslen said. “We need to continually adapt, change and improve as we learn more about prevention and effective strategies to address the challenging issues that lead to sexual harassment and sexual assault.”

Among other findings, USMA was the only service academy that reported no incidents of sexual harassment and remains in full compliance with DOD prevention, victim assistance and advocacy, accountability and assessment goals.

About West Point

The U.S. Military Academy at West Point is a four-year, co-educational, federal, liberal arts college located 50 miles north of New York City. It was founded in 1802 as America's first college of engineering and continues today as the world's premier leader-development institution, consistently ranked among top colleges in the country. Its mission remains constant—to educate, train, and inspire the Corps of Cadets so that each graduate is a commissioned leader of character committed to the values of Duty, Honor, Country and prepared for a career of professional excellence and service to the nation as an officer in the U. S. Army. For more information, go to www.westpoint.edu.